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Description**FIELD OF THE INVENTION**

[0001] The present invention relates to pay television systems generally and more particularly to systems for controlling access to pay television transmissions.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

[0002] Many pay television systems today employ "smart cards" which are cards of the size of credit cards that include integrated circuits (IC). Typically, the smart cards are used to enable access to television transmissions. In such a case, a subscriber inserts a smart card in a slot in a cable television decoder to allow access to television transmissions.

[0003] Usually, one smart card is associated with one television (TV) set and the subscriber receives one smart card upon payment of a subscription fee. The subscriber may also purchase, at a reduced price, additional smart cards for use with other TV sets in his house.

[0004] In such a case, there is a possibility that the subscriber may try to purchase many cards, and sell most of them to other people at a price which is lower than the regular price, but higher than the price that the subscriber has paid for them. This may cause substantial losses to operators of television transmission systems.

[0005] In a co-pending U.S. patent application to Doron Handelman et al., Ser. No. 08/375,995 filed on January 20, 1995, entitled "Secure Access Systems", and assigned to the same assignee as the present application, as well as in corresponding European application 95115554.8 published on April 10, 1996, there is described a parental control system which utilizes two smart cards that are inserted in a decoder. When one of the cards, which is a main card, is inserted in the decoder, access is enabled to non-restricted programs only. When both cards are inserted in the decoder, access is enabled to restricted programs as well as to non-restricted programs.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0006] The present invention seeks to provide systems and methods for controlling access to pay television transmissions at a site in which a plurality of pay television decoders are placed.

[0007] There is thus provided in accordance with a preferred embodiment of the present invention a pay television system including:

- a pay television network;
- a subscriber unit which receives pay television transmissions via the pay television network and displays the pay television transmissions on televisions coupled thereto, the subscriber unit including

at least two pay television decoders, wherein a first decoder includes a first card reader and a second decoder includes a second card reader;

a first smart card which is operative, upon insertion in a first slot in the first card reader, to activate decoding of the pay television transmissions in the first decoder; and

a second smart card which is operative, upon insertion in a second slot in the second card reader, to activate decoding of the pay television transmissions in the second decoder, wherein the second smart card is operable to deactivate in accordance with predetermined criteria, and to reactivate upon insertion in the first slot in the first card reader after removal of the first smart card from the first card reader.

[0008] Preferably, the predetermined criteria include at least one of a predetermined time and a predetermined date.

[0009] In accordance with a preferred embodiment of the present invention the predetermined criteria include a predetermined date, and the first smart card is operable to deactivate at a first deactivation date, the second smart card is operable to deactivate at a second deactivation date, and the first deactivation date is later than the second deactivation date.

[0010] Preferably, at least one of the first smart card and the second smart card is also operable to control access to a video-cassette-recorder for recording pay television transmissions.

[0011] Further in accordance with a preferred embodiment of the present invention the second smart card receives, upon reactivation, a new deactivation date which is later than the second deactivation date. The new deactivation date is provided by one of the first decoder, the first smart card and a pay television headend.

[0012] Preferably, the new deactivation date is provided by adding a time increment to a current system time, and calculation of the new deactivation date is performed at one of the first decoder, the first smart card, and the headend.

[0013] In accordance with a preferred embodiment of the present invention reactivation of the second smart card includes transmission of chaining data, the chaining data including one of a signature, a key and a seed which is operable to at least one of validate, identify, verify and authenticate the second smart card. The chaining data also includes a digital representation of a time increment which is associated with a current system time to provide a deactivation date.

[0014] In a preferred embodiment of the invention the one of a signature, a key and a seed is identical for the first smart card and for the second smart card.

[0015] Further in accordance with a preferred embodiment of the present invention the predetermined criteria include a predetermined date, and the second smart card is operable to deactivate at any time of day during

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the predetermined date.

[0016] In a preferred embodiment of the present invention the first smart card and the second smart card are interchangeable.

[0017] There is also provided in accordance with a preferred embodiment of the present invention a pay television decoder including:

a smart card reader including a smart card slot via which a first smart card is read;
a decoder memory, coupled to the smart card reader, which is operable to store one of a signature, a key and a seed identifying the first smart card; and
a decoder processor, coupled to the decoder memory, which is operable to calculate a deactivation date based on data received from one of the first smart card, a pay television headend and the decoder memory, wherein

the decoder processor is operable to provide the deactivation date to a second smart card, when the second smart card is inserted in the smart card slot and read via the smart card reader, in response to a match between the one of a signature, a key and a seed identifying the first smart card and a corresponding one of a signature, a key and a seed identifying the second smart card.

[0018] In accordance with another preferred embodiment of the present invention there is provided a pay television decoder including:

a smart card reader including a smart card slot via which a first smart card is read; and
a decoder memory, coupled to the smart card reader, which is operable:
to store a deactivation date of a second smart card, and one of a signature, a key and a seed identifying the first smart card,
to provide the one of a signature, a key and a seed identifying the first smart card to the second smart card, when the second smart card is inserted in the smart card slot in the smart card reader, in response to a first instruction transmitted by the second smart card, and
to provide the deactivation date to the second smart card in response to a second instruction transmitted by the second smart card.

[0019] Preferably, the second instruction is transmitted in response to a match between the one of a signature, a key and a seed identifying the first smart card, and a corresponding one of a signature, a key and a seed identifying the second smart card.

[0020] There is also provided in accordance with a preferred embodiment of the present invention a pay television access control method to be employed in a pay television system in which pay television programs are transmitted to a plurality of subscribers, each being en-

titled to receive selected programs, the method including:

providing a first decoder activated by a first smart card to decode pay television transmissions, and a second decoder activated by a second smart card to decode pay television transmissions;
deactivating the second smart card in accordance with predetermined criteria;
removing the first smart card from a first card reader in the first decoder; and
reactivating the second smart card by inserting the second smart card in the first card reader of the first decoder.

[0021] Preferably, the predetermined criteria include at least one of a predetermined time and a predetermined date.

[0022] Further in accordance with a preferred embodiment of the present invention the predetermined criteria include a predetermined date, and the method includes deactivating the first smart card at a first deactivation date, and deactivating the second smart card at a second deactivation date, wherein the first deactivation date is later than the second deactivation date.

[0023] Preferably, the method also includes supplying a new deactivation date to the second smart card upon reactivation. The supplying step includes adding a time increment to a current system time.

[0024] There is also provided in accordance with a preferred embodiment of the present invention a pay television access control method including:

providing, in a pay television decoder, a smart card reader including a smart card slot via which a first smart card is read, and a decoder memory, coupled to the smart card reader, which is operable to store one of a signature, a key and a seed identifying the first smart card;
coupling, to the decoder memory, a decoder processor which is operable to calculate a deactivation date based on data received from one of the first smart card, a pay television headend and the decoder memory;
inserting in the smart card slot in the smart card reader a second smart card; and
providing the deactivation date to the second smart card in response to a match between the one of a signature, a key and a seed identifying the first smart card and a corresponding one of a signature, a key and a seed identifying the second smart card.

[0025] In accordance with another preferred embodiment of the present invention there is provided a pay television access control method including:

providing, in a pay television decoder, a smart card reader including a smart card slot via which a first

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smart card is read, and a decoder memory coupled to the smart card reader;
 storing, in the decoder memory, a deactivation date of a second smart card, and one of a signature, a key and a seed identifying the first smart card;
 inserting the second smart card in the smart card slot in the smart card reader;
 supplying the one of a signature, a key and a seed identifying the first smart card to the second smart card in response to a first instruction transmitted by the second smart card; and
 transmitting the deactivation date to the second smart card in response to a second instruction generated by the second smart card.

[0026] Further in accordance with another preferred embodiment of the present invention there is provided a pay television access control method including:

providing a decoder including a decoder memory and a smart card reader;
 inserting a first smart card in the smart card reader;
 transferring, from the first smart card to the decoder memory, chaining data for activating a second smart card;
 removing the first smart card from the smart card reader;
 inserting the second smart card in the smart card reader;
 transmitting, from the decoder memory to the second smart card, the chaining data; and
 enabling the chaining data to activate the second smart card.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0027] The present invention will be understood and appreciated more fully from the following detailed description, taken in conjunction with the drawings in which:

Fig. 1 is a generalized illustration of a portion of a pay television system installed at a subscriber residence and constructed and operative in accordance with a preferred embodiment of the present invention; and

Figs. 2A and 2B together constitute a flowchart illustrating a preferred method of operation of the system of Fig. 1 in accordance with a preferred embodiment of the present invention.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS

[0028] Reference is now made to Fig. 1, which is a generalized illustration of a portion of a pay television system constructed and operative in accordance with a preferred embodiment of the present invention.

[0029] Throughout the specification and claims the term "pay television" is used in a broad sense to include one-way and two-way cable television as well as satellite television, CATV, and pay television generally.

[0030] In the pay television system, pay television programs are transmitted to a plurality of subscriber units via a pay television network. Typically, some of the subscribers purchase more than one decoder to be installed in each room in a subscriber residence in which television sets are present. The decoders are operative to decode pay television transmissions and are each activated by a smart card.

[0031] The term "decode" in all of its forms is used throughout the specification and claims in a broad sense to cover all forms of data decoding, ranging from simple descrambling or decoding to decryption.

[0032] For the purposes of the present invention, the term "activate" in all of its forms, and taken in conjunction with a smart card, is used throughout the specification and claims to include enabling the smart card to perform access control functions which may include decoding, descrambling and decryption of information.

[0033] The term "deactivate" in all of its forms, and taken in conjunction with the smart card, is used to include preventing the smart card from performing the access control functions.

[0034] In a preferred embodiment of the present invention a subscriber unit includes a decoder 10 which is coupled to a television set 12, and a decoder 14 which is coupled to a television set 16.

[0035] Decoder 10 and television 12 are preferably placed in a room A at a subscriber residence, and decoder 14 and television 16 are placed in a room B at the subscriber residence. Decoders 10 and 14 are each operative to receive pay television transmissions from the pay television network.

[0036] Preferably, decoder 10 is activated by a smart card 18 which is inserted in a smart card slot 20 in decoder 10, and decoder 14 is activated by a smart card 22 which is inserted in a smart card slot 24 in decoder 14.

[0037] Each of smart cards 18 and 22 includes a processor (not shown) and a memory (not shown), as is well known in the art. Smart cards 18 and 22 employ information which is transmitted via the pay television network and received at the corresponding decoders 10 and 14 to generate a decoding or decryption key which is used to decode pay television transmissions. For that purpose, smart cards 18 and 22 perform an algorithm which is processed by each of the smart card processors, as is well known in the art.

[0038] Smart cards 18 and 22 communicate with the corresponding decoders 10 and 14 via smart card readers (not shown) which form part of decoders 10 and 14 respectively. When inserted in the corresponding slots 20 and 24, smart cards 18 and 22 are electrically connected to the respective smart card readers.

[0039] Preferably, decoder 10 includes a decoder

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processor 26 and a decoder memory 28 which is coupled to decoder processor 26. Decoder 14 includes a decoder processor 30 and a decoder memory 32 which is coupled to decoder processor 30. The smart card readers (not shown) which form part of decoders 10 and 14 are respectively coupled to decoder processors 26 and 30.

[0040] In a preferred embodiment of the present invention the smart card readers may provide information received at decoders 10 and 14 from the pay television network to smart cards 18 and 22, and may provide information read from smart cards 18 and 22 to decoders 10 and 14.

[0041] The information communicated to and from smart cards 18 and 22 may include data which is employed to generate the key, entitlements, clock data and messages such as invalidation of a card.

[0042] If one of smart cards 18 and 22 becomes invalid, the key which is generated by the corresponding smart card processor does not decode the pay television transmissions, and access to the pay television transmissions is denied. Alternatively, any other appropriate means of preventing access to the pay television transmissions may be employed such as, for example: the corresponding smart card processor may fail to generate a key; or the corresponding smart card processor may generate a key but may not communicate the generated key for further processing.

[0043] Typically, the smart cards are purchased from a pay television vendor. When purchased, the vendor typically activates the cards by passing them through an activating machine (not shown) which applies an activation algorithm. In a preferred embodiment of the present invention the cards remain active until certain predetermined criteria occur which turn the cards invalid.

[0044] Usually, purchasing a smart card is associated with a subscription to pay TV services. When the subscriber purchases more than one smart card, he typically pays less for a second subscription than for a first subscription.

[0045] Generally, a smart card is not uniquely associated with a specific decoder. Therefore, a valid smart card may activate any decoder of the type to which it fits. In such a case, there is a possibility that a subscriber may purchase several smart cards at a reduced price and sell them, at a price which is higher than the reduced price but still less than the full price, to other people. The system and method of the present invention may be employed to prevent such cases.

[0046] Reference is now made to Figs. 2A and 2B which together form a flowchart illustration of a preferred method of operation of the system of Fig. 1.

[0047] In accordance with a preferred embodiment of the present invention a first smart card and a second smart card which are active, may be deactivated in accordance with predetermined criteria. Preferably, the predetermined criteria may include a predetermined

date and/or a predetermined time. However, other criteria may be employed, such as number of purchases of premium programs or amount of money spent on purchases.

[0048] If the predetermined criteria include predetermined date criteria, the first smart card may include a predetermined first deactivation date and the second smart card may include a predetermined second deactivation date. Each of the deactivation dates may be stored in a memory zone in the corresponding smart card by passing the smart cards through a machine (not shown), such as the activating machine mentioned with reference to Fig. 1.

[0049] The machine, typically controlled by an algorithm in software, preferably burns data related to the deactivation dates into corresponding memory zones in the first and second smart cards. It is to be appreciated that the memories of the first and second smart cards may be of the EEPROM (Electronic Erasable Programmable Read Only Memory) type.

[0050] In another preferred embodiment of the present invention the above mentioned deactivation dates may be communicated to the first smart card and to the second smart card via the pay television network.

[0051] Preferably, the deactivation dates are maintained in terms of months or days. The first deactivation date and the second deactivation date may be different, and may be determined at time of purchase or at time of manufacture.

[0052] Generally, television programs are decoded in a first decoder and in a second decoder to which the first and second smart cards are respectively coupled until the earliest of the above mentioned deactivation dates elapses.

[0053] Assuming that the second deactivation date is earlier than the first deactivation date, the second smart card is the first to be deactivated. Deactivation of the second smart card preferably occurs when a current system date matches or exceeds the second deactivation date. The match may be found by comparison of the current system date to the deactivation date stored in the second smart card. Such comparison is typically performed in a processor which forms part of the second smart card as mentioned herein above with reference to Fig. 1.

[0054] In another preferred embodiment of the present invention the processor which forms part of the second smart card may compare the current system date with a deactivation date which is received via the pay television network.

[0055] If a match is found between the current system date and the second deactivation date, or if the current system date exceeds the second deactivation date, the second smart card preferably generates a message which is displayed on a TV to which the second decoder is coupled. The message typically indicates that the second smart card is deactivated, and programming material is not decoded. It is to be appreciated that the first

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smart card remains active and programming material is decoded at the first decoder.

[0056] To reactivate the second smart card, a subscriber preferably removes the first smart card from a first slot in a first card reader in the first decoder and replaces it by the second smart card.

[0057] In a preferred embodiment of the present invention, the first smart card is operative, when inserted in the first slot, to transfer to the first decoder chaining data which is used to reactivate the second smart card, and the chaining data is transferred to the second smart card when the second smart card is inserted in the first slot. Alternatively, the first decoder may be programmed to include the data required for reactivation of the second smart card at entitlement time, which may be when the first decoder and the second decoder are purchased. Further alternatively, the first decoder may include a plurality of smart card slots, and the second smart card may be inserted in an unfilled slot while the first smart card is inserted in the first slot, the chaining data being transferred from the first card to the second card via the decoder.

[0058] The chaining data may include a signature, a key or a seed which may be employed to at least one of validate, identify, verify and authenticate the second smart card. Preferably, the chaining data also includes a digital representation of a time increment which may be employed to calculate a deactivation date. The time increment is typically specified in months and days.

[0059] The signature is checked and compared for validity in a decoder processor which forms part of the first decoder, such as decoder processor 26 of Fig. 1. Alternatively, the processor which forms part of the second smart card may be operative to check validity of the signature received from the first decoder.

[0060] If validity is found, i.e. the signatures of the first smart card and the second smart card coincide, the decoder processor of the first decoder adds the time increment to the current system date to generate a new deactivation date. Preferably, the new deactivation date is stored in another memory zone in the second smart card. Alternatively, the new deactivation date is communicated, via the pay television network, to a pay television headend (not shown), which may later use the new deactivation date to deactivate the second smart card when the new deactivation date elapses.

[0061] It is to be appreciated that a processor which forms part of the first smart card, rather than the decoder processor of the first decoder, may be operative to calculate the new deactivation date of the second smart card. In such a case the processor which forms part of the first smart card and the processor which forms part of the second smart card may communicate, via the first card reader, with a decoder memory which forms part of the first decoder, such as decoder memory 28 of Fig. 1. The decoder memory is preferably operable:

to receive from the processor which forms part of

the first smart card, and to store data including the new deactivation date of the second smart card, and one of a signature, a key and a seed identifying the first smart card;

to provide the one of a signature, a key and a seed identifying the first smart card to the second smart card, when the second smart card is inserted in the first slot in the first decoder, in response to a first instruction transmitted by the second smart card; and

to provide the new deactivation date to the second smart card in response to a second instruction transmitted by the second smart card.

[0062] Preferably, the second smart card transmits the second instruction to the decoder memory only if the signatures of the first smart card and the second smart card coincide. The new deactivation date which is received from the decoder memory is stored in the second smart card.

[0063] In another preferred embodiment of the present invention the new deactivation date is calculated in a headend processor which is located at the head-end of the pay television system, and the headend rather than the first smart card provides the new deactivation date to the decoder memory.

[0064] After the new deactivation date is stored in the second smart card, the decoder processor of the first decoder provides the second smart card an instruction which reactivates the second smart card. Alternatively, the decoder processor of the first decoder informs the headend that a new deactivation date is stored in the second smart card, and the headend transmits an instruction which reactivates the second smart card.

[0065] After the second smart card is reactivated, it may be removed from the first slot in the first decoder and inserted in the second decoder. Since the second smart card is reactivated, the pay television programs are decoded.

[0066] It is to be appreciated that various algorithms may be applied to calculate the new deactivation date. Such algorithms may include adding multiple time increments to the current system date, and adding a constant number of hours to the time increment to achieve deactivation at any selected time of a day.

[0067] In a preferred embodiment of the present invention the time increment may be modified by the decoder processor of the first decoder or programmed by the manufacturer or the pay television vendor. Preferably, variable time increments may be stored in the decoder memory which may be controlled by the decoder processor of the first decoder.

[0068] It is to be appreciated that the first and second smart cards are preferably linked together at entitlement time and thus the first smart card recognizes the signature of the second smart card and vice versa. If the chaining data is provided by a decoder rather than by a smart card, then the first and second decoders are pref-

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erably linked together at entitlement time, and the first and second smart cards receive the chaining data from the first and second decoders respectively when inserted in the respective decoders for the first time.

[0069] The new deactivation date may be later than the deactivation date of the first smart card. In such a case, when the deactivation date of the first smart card elapses and the first smart card is deactivated, the second smart card may reactivate the first smart card.

[0070] The above mentioned procedure is a chaining procedure which may be repeated many times, and for long periods. In such a procedure, each card may reactivate any number of cards which are linked thereto. It is to be appreciated that reactivation of a card may take less than a second, or a few seconds if communication with the headend is required as described herein above.

[0071] In a preferred embodiment of the present invention the two cards, i.e. the first smart card and the second smart card, are interchangeable, and the chaining procedure may initiate with the deactivation of the first smart card rather than the deactivation of the second smart card. It is to be appreciated that the first decoder and the second decoder are also interchangeable.

[0072] In another preferred embodiment of the present invention, the first smart card may reactivate the second smart card twice, three times, or more before the first smart card is reactivated. The time increment may be calculated so that no two chained cards deactivate at the same time. If such a principle is maintained, an active card in the chained cards may always reactivate a deactivated chained card.

[0073] The above mentioned chaining procedure gives the subscriber a very strong incentive to maintain both the first and second smart cards, and all cards chained to the first and second smart cards which he purchases from the vendor, in his residence in order to physically chain the cards at particular time periods. This makes it difficult, if not impossible, for the subscriber to sell one or more of the cards to another person.

[0074] In a preferred embodiment of the present invention the first and second smart cards may be also employed to control access to a VCR (Video Cassette Recorder) to allow or prevent recording of television programs. In such a case, when one of the cards is deactivated, television programs are not decoded and the VCR may record only non-intelligible material.

[0075] In another preferred embodiment of the present invention, the subscriber may postpone deactivation of a card whose deactivation date has elapsed for a period of a few hours by, for example, pressing a key (not shown) in a remote control (not shown) to prevent deactivation while he views a selected program. In such a case, the decoder processor of the first decoder, or the processor which forms part of the second smart card, may add a constant time increment, such as an hour, to the elapsed second deactivation date.

[0076] It is also to be appreciated that deactivation

dates may be specified in hours, as well as in months and days, and deactivation may be selected to occur late at night or at other times of day at which television programs are not typically viewed.

[0077] Preferably, the chaining data for reactivation of a card is not transferred before a deactivation time elapses. Thus, if the subscriber inserts the second smart card in the first slot before the second smart card is deactivated, no reactivation occurs.

[0078] Typically, there is a time delay between manufacturing of cards and sale of the cards to a subscriber. Since deactivation dates may be pre-selected at manufacturing time, such time delay may result in deactivation of the cards before the cards are purchased. In such a case, when a card is purchased, a new deactivation date may be calculated based on the current system time, and different time increments may be applied to each card.

[0079] It is appreciated that various features of the invention which are, for clarity, described in the contexts of separate embodiments may also be provided in combination in a single embodiment. Conversely, various features of the invention which are, for brevity, described in the context of a single embodiment may also be provided separately or in any suitable subcombination.

[0080] It will be appreciated by persons skilled in the art that the present invention is not limited by what has been particularly shown and described hereinabove. Rather the scope of the present invention is defined only by the claims which follow:

Claims

1. A pay television system comprising:

a pay television network;
a subscriber unit which receives pay television transmissions via the pay television network and displays the pay television transmissions on televisions coupled thereto, the subscriber unit including at least two pay television decoders, wherein a first decoder (10) includes a first card reader (20) and a second decoder (14) includes a second card reader (24);
a first smart card (18) which is operative, upon insertion in a first slot in the first card reader, to activate decoding of the pay television transmissions in the first decoder; and
a second smart card (22) which is operative, upon insertion in a second slot in the second card reader, to activate decoding of the pay television transmissions in the second decoder,

wherein said second smart card deactivates in accordance with predetermined criteria and reactivates upon insertion in the first card reader by receiving updated predetermined criteria.

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2. A system according to claim 1 and wherein said first decoder includes at least one additional card reader, and
said second smart card reactivates upon insertion in the additional card reader. 5
3. A system according to any of claims 1 - 2 and wherein said predetermined criteria include at least one of a predetermined time and a predetermined date. 10
4. A system according to any of claims 1 - 2 and wherein said predetermined criteria include a predetermined date, and said first smart card deactivates at a first deactivation date, said second smart card deactivates at a second deactivation date, and said first deactivation date is later than said second deactivation date. 15
5. A system according to any of claims 1 - 2 and wherein at least one of said first smart card and said second smart card is also operable to control access to a video-cassette-recorder for recording pay television transmissions. 20
6. A system according to claim 4 and wherein said second smart card receives, upon reactivation, a new deactivation date which is later than said second deactivation date. 25
7. A system according to claim 6 and wherein said new deactivation date is provided by one of said first decoder, said first smart card and a pay television headend. 30
8. A system according to claim 7 and wherein said new deactivation date is provided by adding a time increment to a current system time, and calculation of said new deactivation date is performed at one of said first decoder, said first smart card, and the pay television headend. 35
9. A system according to any of claims 1 - 2 and wherein reactivation of said second smart card includes transmission of chaining data, said chaining data including one of a signature, a key and a seed which is employed to at least one of validate, identify, verify and authenticate said second smart card. 40
10. A system according to claim 9 and wherein said chaining data also includes a digital representation of a time increment which is associated with a current system time to provide a deactivation date. 45
11. A system according to claim 9 and wherein said one of a signature, a key and a seed is identical for the first smart card and for the second smart card. 50
12. A system according to any of claims 1 - 2 and wherein said predetermined criteria include a predetermined date, and said second smart card is deactivated at any time of day during said predetermined date.
13. A system according to any of claims 1 - 2 and wherein said first smart card and said second smart card are interchangeable.
14. A pay television decoder (10) comprising:
a smart card reader (20) including a smart card slot via which a first smart card is read;
a decoder memory (28), coupled to said smart card reader, which is operable to store one of a signature, a key and a seed identifying said first smart card; and
a decoder processor (26), coupled to said decoder memory, which is operable to calculate a deactivation date based on data received from one of said first smart card, a pay television headend and said decoder memory, wherein said decoder processor is operable to provide said deactivation date to a second smart card for its reactivation, when said second smart card is inserted in said smart card slot and read via said smart card reader, in response to a match between said one of a signature, a key and a seed identifying said first smart card and a corresponding one of a signature, a key and a seed identifying said second smart card.
15. A pay television decoder (10) comprising:
a smart card reader (20) including a smart card slot via which a first smart card is read; and
a decoder memory (28), coupled to said smart card reader, which is operable:
to store a deactivation date of a second smart card, and one of a signature, a key and a seed identifying said first smart card,
to provide said one of a signature, a key and a seed identifying said first smart card to said second smart card, when said second smart card is inserted in said smart card slot in said smart card reader, in response to a first instruction transmitted by the second smart card, and
to provide said deactivation date to said second smart card for its reactivation in response to a second instruction transmitted by the second smart card.
16. A decoder according to claim 15 and wherein said second instruction is transmitted in response to a match between said one of a signature, a key and a seed identifying said first smart card, and a corresponding one of a signature, a key and a seed

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identifying said second smart card.

17. A pay television method in a pay television system in which pay television programs are transmitted to a plurality of subscribers, each subscriber being entitled to receive selected programs, comprising:

providing a first decoder activated by a first smart card to decode pay television transmissions, and a second decoder activated by a second smart card to decode pay television transmissions;
deactivating said second smart card in accordance with predetermined criteria;
reactivating said second smart card by inserting said second smart card in said first decoder.

18. A method according to claims 17 and wherein the first decoder includes a first card reader and a second card reader, and also including the step of:

inserting said first smart card in said first card reader,
wherein said inserting said second smart card in said first decoder comprises inserting said second smart card in said second card reader.

19. A method according to any of claims 17 - 18 and wherein said predetermined criteria include at least one of a predetermined time and a predetermined date.

20. A method according to any of claims 17 - 18 and wherein the predetermined criteria include a predetermined date, and the method comprises deactivating said first smart card at a first deactivation date, and deactivating said second smart card at a second deactivation date, wherein said first deactivation date is later than said second deactivation date.

21. A method according to any of claims 17 - 18 and comprising supplying a new deactivation date to said second smart card upon reactivation.

22. A method according to claim 21 and wherein said supplying includes adding a time increment to a current system time to create said new deactivation date.

23. A pay television access control method comprising:

providing, in a pay television decoder, a smart card reader including a smart card slot via which a first smart card is read, and a decoder memory, coupled to the smart card reader, which is operable to store one of a signature, a key and a seed identifying said first smart card;

coupling, to said decoder memory, a decoder processor which is operable to calculate a deactivation date based on data received from one of said first smart card, a pay television headend and said decoder memory;
removing said first smart card from said smart card reader inserting in said smart card slot in said smart card reader a second smart card;
and
providing said deactivation date to said second smart card in response to a match between said one of a signature, a key and a seed identifying said first smart card and a corresponding one of a signature, a key and a seed identifying said second smart card.

24. A pay television access control method comprising:

providing, in a pay television decoder, a smart card reader including a smart card slot via which a first smart card is read, and a decoder memory coupled to said smart card reader;
storing, in said decoder memory, a deactivation date of a second smart card, and one of a signature, a key and a seed identifying said first smart card;
inserting said second smart card in said smart card slot in said smart card reader;
supplying said one of a signature, a key and a seed identifying said first smart card to said second smart card in response to a first instruction transmitted by the second smart card; and
transmitting said deactivation date to said second smart card in response to a second instruction generated by the second smart card.

25. A pay television access control method comprising:

providing a decoder including a decoder memory and a smart card reader;
inserting a first smart card in said smart card reader;
transferring, from said first smart card to said decoder memory, chaining data corresponding to one of a signature, a key and a seed for activating a second smart card;
removing said first smart card from said smart card reader;
inserting said second smart card in said smart card reader;
transmitting, from said decoder memory to said second smart card, said chaining data; and
enabling said chaining data to activate said second smart card.

26. A method according to any of claims 1, 2, 17 or 18 and wherein said predetermined criteria include a number of times premium programs have been pur-

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chased before deactivation of said second smart card.

27. A system according to claim 8 and wherein the calculation of said new deactivation date includes adding a constant number of hours to said new deactivation date so as to achieve deactivation at a selected time of a day. 5
28. A method according to claim 22 and wherein said supplying includes adding a predetermined constant number of hours to said new deactivation date. 10
29. A system according to any of claims 8 or 22 and wherein the time increment is modifiable. 15
30. A method according to claim 22 and comprising postponing deactivation of the second smart card for a predetermined time by operating a key in a remote control. 20
31. A system according to claim 8 and wherein said time increment is specified in at least one of hours, days and months. 25
32. A chaining method for use with a plurality of smart cards, the method comprising:
- providing a plurality of decoders, each including a smart card reader; 30
 - inserting a smart card in each smart card reader;
 - deactivating at least some of the plurality of decoders by deactivating the associated smart cards in accordance with predetermined criteria while maintaining a smart card associated with at least one decoder activated; 35
 - removing a smart card associated with said one activated decoder from a smart card reader associated with said one activated decoder; 40
 - removing smart cards associated with said some of the plurality of decoders from corresponding smart card readers associated with said some of the plurality of decoders; 45
 - separately inserting each of said smart cards associated with said some of the plurality of decoders in said smart card reader associated with said one activated decoder; and
 - activating at least one of said smart cards associated with said some of the plurality of decoders upon insertion in said smart card reader associated with said one activated decoder. 50
33. A chaining method according to claim 32 and wherein said step of inserting a smart card in each smart card reader comprises transferring chaining data corresponding to one of a signature, a seed 55

and a key from each smart card to each corresponding smart card reader, and said activating step comprises:

separately transmitting first chaining data from said one activated decoder to each of said smart cards associated with said some of the plurality of decoders; and
separately enabling said first chaining data to activate each of said smart cards associated with said some of the plurality of decoders.

Patentansprüche

1. Pay-Fernsehsystem, umfassend:

ein Pay-Fernsehsystem;

eine Teilnehmereinheit, die Pay-Fernsehübertragungen über das Pay-Fernsehsystem empfängt und die Pay-Fernsehübertragungen auf daran angeschlossenen Fernsehapparaten anzeigt, wobei die Teilnehmereinheit zumindest zwei Pay-Fernsehdecoder einschließt, wobei ein erster Decoder (10) einen ersten Kartenleser (20) einschließt und ein zweiter Decoder (14) einen zweiten Kartenleser (24) einschließt,

eine erste Chipkarte (18), die nach einer Einführung in einen ersten Schlitz in dem ersten Kartenleser funktionsfähig ist, um ein Decodieren der Pay-Fernsehübertragungen in dem ersten Decoder zu aktivieren; und

eine zweite Chipkarte (22), die nach einer Einführung in einen zweiten Schlitz in dem zweiten Kartenleser funktionsfähig ist, um eine Decodierung der Pay-Fernsehübertragungen in dem zweiten Decoder zu aktivieren,

wobei die zweite Chipkarte in Übereinstimmung mit vorbestimmten Kriterien deaktiviert und nach einer Einführung in den ersten Kartenleser durch Empfangen aktualisierter vorbestimmter Kriterien reaktiviert.

2. System nach Anspruch 1, wobei der erste Decoder zumindest einen zusätzlichen Kartenleser einschließt, und

die zweite Chipkarte nach einer Einführung in den zusätzlichen Kartenleser reaktiviert.

3. System nach einem der Ansprüche 1 - 2, wobei die vorbestimmten Kriterien zumindest eine vorbestimmte Zeit oder ein vorbestimmtes Datum einschließen.

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4. System nach einem der Ansprüche 1 - 2, wobei die vorbestimmten Kriterien ein vorbestimmtes Datum einschließen und die erste Chipkarte zu einem ersten Deaktivierungsdatum deaktiviert, die zweite Chipkarte zu einem zweiten Deaktivierungsdatum deaktiviert, und das erste Deaktivierungsdatum später ist als das zweite Deaktivierungsdatum.
5. System nach einem der Ansprüche 1 - 2, wobei zumindest entweder die erste Chipkarte oder zweite Chipkarte auch funktionsfähig ist, um einen Zugriff auf einen Videokassettenrekorder zum Aufzeichnen von Pay-Fernsehübertragungen zu steuern.
6. System nach Anspruch 4, wobei die zweite Chipkarte nach einer Reaktivierung ein neues Deaktivierungsdatum empfängt, welches später ist als das zweite Deaktivierungsdatum.
7. System nach Anspruch 6, wobei das neue Deaktivierungsdatum durch entweder den ersten Decoder, die erste Chipkarte oder eine Pay-Fernsehempfangsstelle bereitgestellt wird.
8. System nach Anspruch 7, wobei das neue Deaktivierungsdatum durch Hinzufügen eines Zeitinkrements zu einer gegenwärtigen Systemzeit bereitgestellt wird, und eine Berechnung des neuen Deaktivierungsdatums in entweder dem ersten Decoder, der ersten Chipkarte oder der Pay-Fernsehempfangsstelle durchgeführt wird.
9. System nach einem der Ansprüche 1 - 2, wobei eine Reaktivierung der zweiten Chipkarte eine Übertragung von verketteten Daten einschließt, wobei die verketteten Daten entweder eine Signatur, einen Schlüssel oder einen Startparameter einschließen, die/der eingesetzt wird, um die zweite Chipkarte zumindest entweder zu validieren, zu identifizieren, zu verifizieren oder zu authentifizieren.
10. System nach Anspruch 9, wobei die verketteten Daten auch eine digitale Darstellung eines Zeitinkrements einschließen, welches einer gegenwärtigen Systemzeit zugeordnet ist, um ein Deaktivierungsdatum bereitzustellen.
11. System nach Anspruch 9, wobei entweder eine Signatur, ein Schlüssel oder ein Startparameter identisch für die erste Chipkarte und für die zweite Chipkarte ist.
12. System nach einem der Ansprüche 1 - 2, wobei die vorbestimmten Kriterien ein vorbestimmtes Datum einschließen und die zweite Chipkarte zu jedweder Zeit eines Tages während des vorbestimmten Datums deaktiviert wird.
13. System nach einem der Ansprüche 1 - 2, wobei die erste Chipkarte und die zweite Chipkarte austauschbar sind.
14. Pay-Fernsehdecoder (10), umfassend:
- einen Chipkartenleser (20) einschließlich eines Chipkartenschlitzes, über welchen eine erste Chipkarte gelesen wird;
 - einen an den Chipkartenleser angeschlossenen Decoderspeicher (28), der funktionsfähig ist, entweder eine Signatur, einen Schlüssel oder einen Startparameter zu speichern, die/der die erste Chipkarte identifiziert; und
 - einen an den Decoderspeicher angeschlossenen Decoderprozessor (26), der funktionsfähig ist, ein Deaktivierungsdatum auf der Grundlage der von entweder der ersten Chipkarte, einer Pay-Fernsehempfangsstelle oder dem Decoderspeicher empfangenen Daten zu berechnen, wobei
 - der Decoderprozessor funktionsfähig ist, der zweiten Chipkarte zu ihrer Reaktivierung das Deaktivierungsdatum bereitzustellen, wenn die zweite Chipkarte in den Chipkartenschlitz eingeführt und über den Chipkartenleser gelesen wird, in Antwort auf eine Anpassung zwischen entweder einer Signatur, einem Schlüssel oder einem Startparameter, die/der die erste Chipkarte identifiziert und entsprechend entweder einer Signatur, einem Schlüssel oder einem Startparameter, die/der die zweite Chipkarte identifiziert.
15. Pay-Fernsehdecoder (10), umfassend:
- einen Chipkartenleser (20) einschließlich eines Chipkartenschlitzes, über welchen eine erste Chipkarte gelesen wird; und
 - einen an den Chipkartenleser angeschlossenen Decoderspeicher (28), der funktionsfähig ist;
 - ein Deaktivierungsdatum einer zweiten Chipkarte und entweder eine Signatur, einen Schlüssel oder einen Startparameter, die/der die erste Chipkarte identifiziert, zu speichern,
 - der zweite Chipkarte entweder eine Signatur, einen Schlüssel oder einen Startparameter bereitzustellen, die/der die erste Chipkarte identifiziert, wenn die zweite Chipkarte in den Chipkartenschlitz in dem Chipkartenleser eingeführt wird, in Antwort auf einen ersten Befehl, der

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durch die zweite Chipkarte übertragen wird, und

um der zweiten Chipkarte zu ihrer Reaktivierung das Deaktivierungsdatum bereitzustellen, in Antwort auf einen zweiten Befehl, der durch die zweite Chipkarte übertragen wird.

16. Decoder nach Anspruch 15, wobei der zweite Befehl in Antwort auf eine Anpassung zwischen entweder einer Signatur, einem Schlüssel oder einem Startparameter, die/der die erste Chipkarte identifiziert und entsprechend entweder einer Signatur, einem Schlüssel und einem Startparameter, die/der die zweite Chipkarte identifiziert, übertragen wird.

17. Pay-Fernsehverfahren in einem Pay-Fernsehsystem, in welchem Pay-Fernsehprogramme zu einer Vielzahl von Teilnehmern übertragen werden, wobei jeder Teilnehmer berechtigt ist, ausgewählte Programme zu empfangen, umfassend:

Bereitstellen eines ersten Decoders, der durch eine erste Chipkarte aktiviert wird, um Pay-Fernsehübertragungen zu decodieren, und eines zweiten Decoders, der durch eine zweite Chipkarte aktiviert wird, um Pay-Fernsehübertragungen zu decodieren;

Deaktivieren der zweiten Chipkarte in Übereinstimmung mit vorbestimmten Kriterien;

Reaktivieren der zweiten Chipkarte durch Einführen der zweiten Chipkarte in den ersten Decoder.

18. Verfahren nach Anspruch 17, wobei der erste Decoder einen ersten Kartenleser und einen zweiten Kartenleser einschließt, und auch einschließend den Schritt:

Einführen der ersten Chipkarte in den ersten Kartenleser,

wobei das Einführen der zweiten Chipkarte in den ersten Decoder ein Einführen der zweiten Chipkarte in den zweiten Kartenleser umfaßt.

19. Verfahren nach einem der Ansprüche 17 - 18, wobei die vorbestimmten Kriterien zumindest entweder eine vorbestimmte Zeit oder ein vorbestimmtes Datum einschließen.

20. Verfahren nach einem der Ansprüche 17 - 18, wobei die vorbestimmten Kriterien ein vorbestimmtes Datum einschließen, und das Verfahren ein Deaktivieren der ersten Chipkarte zu einem ersten Deaktivierungsdatum, und ein Deaktivieren der zweiten

Chipkarte zu einem zweiten Deaktivierungsdatum umfaßt, wobei das erste Deaktivierungsdatum später ist als das zweite Deaktivierungsdatum.

21. Verfahren nach einem der Ansprüche 17 - 18, umfassend ein Zuführen eines neuen Deaktivierungsdatums zu der zweiten Chipkarte nach einer Reaktivierung.

22. Verfahren nach Anspruch 21, wobei das Zuführen ein Hinzufügen eines Zeitinkrements zu einer gegenwärtigen Systemzeit einschließt, um das neue Deaktivierungsdatum zu erzeugen.

23. Pay-Fernsehzugriffssteuerverfahren, umfassend:

Bereitstellen, in einem Pay-Fernsehdecoder, eines Chipkartenlesers einschließlich eines Chipkartenschlitzes, über welchen eine erste Chipkarte gelesen wird und eines mit dem Chipkartenleser gekoppelten Decoderspeichers, der funktionsfähig ist, entweder eine Signatur, einen Schlüssel oder einen Startparameter, die/der die erste Chipkarte identifiziert, zu speichern;

Koppeln eines Decoderprozessors, der funktionsfähig ist, ein Deaktivierungsdatum auf der Grundlage der von entweder der ersten Chipkarte, einer Pay-Fernsehempfangsstelle oder dem Decoderspeicher empfangenen Daten zu berechnen, mit dem Decoderspeicher;

Entfernen der ersten Chipkarte von dem Chipkartenleser;

Einführen einer zweiten Chipkarte in den Chipkartenschlitz in dem Chipkartenleser; und

Bereitstellen einer zweiten Chipkarte das Deaktivierungsdatum in Antwort auf eine Anpassung zwischen entweder einer Signatur, einem Schlüssel oder einem Startparameter, die/der die erste Chipkarte identifiziert und entsprechend entweder einer Signatur, einem Schlüssel oder einem Startparameter, die/der die zweite Chipkarte identifiziert.

24. Pay-Fernsehzugriffssteuerverfahren, umfassend:

Bereitstellen, in einem Pay-Fernsehdecoder, eines Chipkartenlesers einschließlich eines Chipkartenschlitzes, über welchen eine erste Chipkarte gelesen wird, und eines mit dem Chipkartenleser gekoppelten Decoderspeichers;

Speichern eines Deaktivierungsdatums einer

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zweiten Chipkarte und entweder einer Signatur, eines Schlüssels oder eines Startparameters, die/der die erste Chipkarte identifiziert, in dem Decoderspeicher;

Einführen der zweiten Chipkarte in den Chipkartenschlitz in dem Chipkartenleser;

Zuführen von entweder einer Signatur, einem Schlüssel oder einem Startparameter, die/der die erste Chipkarte identifiziert, zu der zweiten Chipkarte in Antwort auf einen ersten Befehl, der durch die zweite Chipkarte übertragen wird; und

Übertragen des Deaktivierungsdatums zu der zweiten Chipkarte in Antwort auf einen zweiten Befehl, der durch die zweite Chipkarte erzeugt wird.

25. Pay-Fernsehzugriffssteuerverfahren, umfassend:

Bereitstellen eines Decoders einschließlich eines Decoderspeichers und eines Chipkartenlesers;

Einführen einer ersten Chipkarte in den Chipkartenleser;

Übertragen von verketteten Daten, die entweder einer Signatur, einem Schlüssel oder einem Startparameter entsprechen, von der ersten Chipkarte zu dem Decoderspeicher zum Aktivieren einer zweiten Chipkarte;

Entfernen der ersten Chipkarte von dem Chipkartenleser;

Einführen der zweiten Chipkarte in den Chipkartenleser;

Übertragen der verketteten Daten von dem Decoderspeicher zu der zweiten Chipkarte; und

Ermöglichen den verketteten Daten, die zweite Chipkarte zu aktivieren.

26. Verfahren nach einem der Ansprüche 1, 2, 17 oder 18, wobei die vorbestimmten Kriterien einer Anzahl von Malen einschließen, zu denen Prämienprogramme vor einer Deaktivierung der zweiten Chipkarte gekauft worden sind.

27. System nach Anspruch 8, wobei die Berechnung des neuen Deaktivierungsdatums ein Hinzufügen einer konstanten Anzahl von Stunden zu dem neuen Deaktivierungsdatum einschließt, um so eine Deaktivierung zu einer ausgewählten Zeit eines Ta-

ges zu erreichen.

28. Verfahren nach Anspruch 22, wobei ein Zuführen ein Hinzufügen einer vorbestimmten konstanten Anzahl von Stunden zu dem neuen Deaktivierungsdatum einschließt.

29. System nach einem der Ansprüche 8 oder 22, wobei das Zeitinkrement modifizierbar ist.

30. Verfahren nach Anspruch 22, umfassend ein Verschieben einer Deaktivierung der zweiten Chipkarte um eine vorbestimmte Zeit durch Drücken einer Taste in einer Fernsteuerung.

31. System nach Anspruch 8, wobei das Zeitinkrement in zumindest entweder Stunden, Tagen oder Monaten spezifiziert wird.

32. Verkettetes Verfahren zur Verwendung mit einer Vielzahl von Chipkarten, wobei das Verfahren umfaßt:

Bereitstellen einer Vielzahl von Decodern, wobei jeder einen Chipkartenleser einschließt;

Einführen einer Chipkarte in jeden Chipkartenleser;

Deaktivieren von zumindest einigen der Vielzahl von Decodern durch ein Deaktivieren der zugeordneten Chipkarten in Übereinstimmung mit vorbestimmten Kriterien, während es aufrechterhalten wird, daß eine Chipkarte, die zumindest einem Decoder zugeordnet ist, aktiviert ist;

Entfernen einer Chipkarte, die dem aktivierten Decoder zugeordnet ist, von einem Chipkartenleser, der dem aktivierten Decoder zugeordnet ist;

Entfernen von Chipkarten, die einigen der Vielzahl von Decodern zugeordnet sind, von den entsprechenden Chipkartenlesern, die einigen der Vielzahl von Decodern zugeordnet sind;

getrenntes Einführen jeder der Chipkarten, die einigen der Vielzahl von Decodern zugeordnet sind, in den Chipkartenleser, der dem einen aktivierten Decoder zugeordnet ist; und

Aktivieren von zumindest der Chipkarten, die einigen der Vielzahl von Decodern zugeordnet sind, nach einer Einführung in den Chipkartenleser, der dem einen aktivierten Decoder zugeordnet ist.

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33. Verkettungsverfahren nach Anspruch 32, wobei der Schritt des Einführens einer Chipkarte in jeden Chipkartenleser ein Übertragen von verketteten Daten, die entweder einer Signatur, einem Startparameter oder einem Schlüssel entsprechen, von jeder Chipkarte zu jedem entsprechenden Chipkartenleser umfaßt und der Aktivierungsschritt umfaßt:

getrenntes Übertragen der ersten verketteten Daten von dem einen aktivierten Decoder zu jeder der Chipkarten, die den einigen der Vielzahl von Decodern zugeordnet sind; und

getrenntes Ermöglichen, den ersten verketteten Daten, jede der Chipkarten, die den einigen der Vielzahl von Decodern zugeordnet sind, zu aktivieren.

Revendications

1. Système de télévision à péage comprenant:

un réseau de télévision à péage;

une unité d'abonné qui reçoit des émissions de télévision à péage via le réseau de télévision à péage et qui affiche les émissions de télévision à péage sur des télévisions qui lui sont couplées, l'unité d'abonné incluant au moins deux décodeurs de télévision à péage, où un premier décodeur (10) inclut un premier lecteur de carte (20) et un second décodeur (14) inclut un second lecteur de carte (24);

une première carte à puce (18) qui fonctionne, suite à une insertion dans une première fente dans le premier lecteur de carte, pour activer le décodage des émissions de télévision à péage dans le premier décodeur; et

une seconde carte à puce (22) qui fonctionne, suite à une insertion dans une seconde fente dans le second lecteur de carte, pour activer le décodage des émissions de télévision à péage dans le second décodeur,

dans lequel ladite seconde carte à puce est désactivée conformément à des critères prédéterminés et est réactivée suite à une insertion dans le premier lecteur de carte du fait de la réception de critères prédéterminés mis à jour.

2. Système selon la revendication 1, dans lequel:

ledit premier décodeur inclut au moins un lecteur de carte additionnel; et

ladite seconde carte à puce est réactivée suite à une insertion dans le lecteur de carte additionnel.

3. Système selon l'une quelconque des revendications 1 et 2, dans lequel lesdits critères prédéterminés incluent au moins un élément pris parmi un temps prédéterminé et une date prédéterminée.

4. Système selon l'une quelconque des revendications 1 et 2, dans lequel lesdits critères prédéterminés incluent une date prédéterminée et ladite première carte à puce est désactivée à une première date de désactivation, ladite seconde carte à puce est désactivée à une seconde date de désactivation et ladite première date de désactivation est plus tard que ladite seconde date de désactivation.

5. Système selon l'une quelconque des revendications 1 et 2, dans lequel au moins une carte prise parmi ladite première carte à puce et ladite seconde carte à puce peut également fonctionner pour commander un accès à un enregistreur à cassette vidéo pour enregistrer des émissions de télévision à péage.

6. Système selon la revendication 4, dans lequel ladite seconde carte à puce reçoit, suite à sa réactivation, une nouvelle date de désactivation qui est plus tard que ladite seconde date de désactivation.

7. Système selon la revendication 6, dans lequel ladite nouvelle date de désactivation est fournie par un élément pris parmi le premier décodeur, ladite première carte à puce et une extrémité de tête de télévision à péage.

8. Système selon la revendication 7, dans lequel ladite nouvelle date de désactivation est fournie en additionnant un incrément temporel à un temps système courant et un calcul de ladite nouvelle date de désactivation est réalisé au niveau d'un élément pris parmi ledit premier décodeur, ladite première carte à puce et l'extrémité de tête de télévision à péage.

9. Système selon l'une quelconque des revendications 1 et 2, dans lequel une réactivation de ladite seconde carte à puce inclut la transmission de données de chaînage, lesdites données de chaînage incluant un élément pris parmi une signature, une clé et un élément de détermination qui est utilisé pour au moins une action prise parmi une validation, une identification, une vérification et une authentification de ladite seconde carte à puce.

10. Système selon la revendication 9, dans lequel lesdites données de chaînage incluent également une représentation numérique d'un incrément temporel

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- qui est associé à un temps système courant afin de produire une date de désactivation.
11. Système selon la revendication 9, dans lequel ledit un élément pris parmi une signature, une clé et un élément de détermination est identique pour la première carte à puce et pour la seconde carte à puce. 5
12. Système selon l'une quelconque des revendications 1 et 2, dans lequel lesdits critères prédéterminés incluent une date prédéterminée et ladite seconde carte à puce est désactivée à n'importe quel instant du jour de ladite date prédéterminée. 10
13. Système selon l'une quelconque des revendications 1 et 2, dans lequel ladite première carte à puce et ladite seconde carte à puce sont interchangeables. 15
14. Décodeur de télévision à péage (10) comprenant : 20
- un lecteur de carte à puce (20) incluant une fente de carte à puce via laquelle une première carte à puce est lue;
- une mémoire de décodeur (28) couplée audit lecteur de carte à puce, qui peut fonctionner pour stocker un élément pris parmi une signature, une clé et un élément de détermination identifiant ladite première carte à puce; et 25
- un processeur de décodeur (26) couplé à ladite mémoire de décodeur, qui peut fonctionner pour calculer une date de désactivation sur la base de données reçues depuis un élément pris parmi ladite première carte à puce, une extrémité de tête de télévision à péage et ladite mémoire de décodeur; 30
- dans lequel: 40
- ledit processeur de décodeur peut fonctionner pour fournir ladite date de désactivation à une seconde carte à puce pour sa réactivation lorsque ladite seconde carte à puce est insérée dans ladite fente de carte à puce et pour effectuer une lecture via ledit lecteur de carte à puce, en réponse à une correspondance entre ledit un élément pris parmi une signature, une clé et un élément de détermination identifiant ladite première carte à puce et un élément correspondant pris parmi une signature, une clé et un élément de détermination identifiant ladite seconde carte à puce. 45
15. Décodeur de télévision à péage (10) comprenant: 50
- un lecteur de carte à puce (20) incluant une fente de carte à puce via laquelle une première carte à puce est lue;
- une mémoire de décodeur (28) couplée audit lecteur de carte à puce, qui peut fonctionner pour: 55
- stocker une date de désactivation d'une seconde carte à puce et un élément correspondant pris parmi une signature, une clé et un élément de détermination identifiant ladite première carte à puce;
- fournir ledit un élément correspondant pris parmi une signature, une clé et un élément de détermination identifiant ladite première carte à puce à ladite seconde carte à puce, lorsque ladite seconde carte à puce est insérée dans ladite fente de carte à puce dans ledit lecteur de carte à puce, en réponse à une instruction transmise par la seconde carte à puce; et
- fournir ladite date de désactivation à ladite seconde carte à puce pour sa réactivation en réponse à une seconde instruction transmise par la seconde carte à puce.
16. Décodeur selon la revendication 15, dans lequel ladite seconde instruction est transmise en réponse à une correspondance entre ledit un élément pris parmi une signature, une clé et un élément de détermination identifiant ladite première carte à puce et un élément correspondant pris parmi une signature, une clé et un élément de détermination identifiant ladite seconde carte à puce. 30
17. Procédé de télévision à péage dans un système de télévision à péage où des programmes de télévision à péage sont transmis à une pluralité d'abonnés, chaque abonné étant autorisé à recevoir des programmes sélectionnés, comprenant: 35
- la fourniture d'un premier décodeur activé par une première carte à puce pour décoder des émissions de télévision à péage et d'un second décodeur activé par une seconde carte à puce pour décoder des émissions de télévision à péage; 40
- la désactivation de ladite seconde carte à puce conformément à des critères prédéterminés; et
- la réactivation de ladite seconde carte à puce en insérant ladite seconde carte à puce dans ledit premier décodeur. 45
18. Procédé selon la revendication 17, dans lequel le premier décodeur inclut un premier lecteur de carte et un second lecteur de carte, et incluant également l'étape de: 50

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insertion de ladite première carte à puce dans ledit premier lecteur de carte,

où ladite insertion de ladite seconde carte à puce dans ledit premier lecteur de carte comprend l'insertion de ladite seconde carte à puce dans ledit second lecteur de carte.

19. Procédé selon l'une quelconque des revendications 17 et 18, dans lequel lesdits critères prédéterminés incluent au moins un élément pris parmi un temps prédéterminé et une date prédéterminée. 10
20. Procédé selon l'une quelconque des revendications 17 et 18, dans lequel les critères prédéterminés incluent une date prédéterminée et le procédé comprend la désactivation de ladite première carte à puce à une première date de désactivation et la désactivation de ladite seconde carte à puce à une seconde date de désactivation, dans lequel ladite première date de désactivation est plus tard que ladite seconde date de désactivation. 20
21. Procédé selon l'une quelconque des revendications 17 et 18, comprenant l'application d'une nouvelle date de désactivation à la seconde carte à puce suite à sa réactivation. 25
22. Procédé selon la revendication 21, dans lequel ladite application inclut l'addition d'un incrément temporel à un temps système courant pour créer ladite nouvelle date de désactivation. 30
23. Procédé de commande d'accès de télévision à péage comprenant: 35
 - la fourniture, dans un décodeur de télévision à péage, d'un lecteur de carte à puce incluant une fente de carte à puce via laquelle une première carte à puce est lue et d'une mémoire de décodeur couplée au lecteur de carte à puce qui peut fonctionner pour stocker un élément pris parmi une signature, une clé et un élément de détermination identifiant ladite première carte à puce; 40
 - le couplage, à ladite mémoire de décodeur, d'un processeur de décodeur qui peut fonctionner pour calculer une date de désactivation sur la base de données reçues depuis un élément pris parmi ladite première carte à puce, une extrémité de tête de télévision à péage et ladite mémoire de décodeur; 50
 - l'enlèvement de ladite première carte à puce dudit lecteur de carte à puce; 55
 - l'insertion dans ladite fente de carte à puce

dans ledit lecteur de carte à puce d'une seconde carte à puce; et

la fourniture de ladite date de désactivation à ladite seconde carte à puce en réponse à une correspondance entre ledit un élément pris parmi une signature, une clé et un élément de détermination identifiant ladite première carte à puce et un élément correspondant pris parmi une signature, une clé et un élément de détermination identifiant ladite seconde carte à puce.

24. Procédé de commande d'accès de télévision à péage comprenant: 15

la fourniture, dans un décodeur de télévision à péage, d'un lecteur de carte à puce incluant une fente de carte à puce via laquelle une première carte à puce est lue et d'une mémoire de décodeur couplée audit lecteur de carte à puce;

le stockage, dans ladite mémoire de décodeur, d'une date de désactivation d'une seconde carte à puce et d'un élément pris parmi une signature, une clé et un élément de détermination identifiant ladite première carte à puce;

l'insertion de ladite seconde carte à puce dans ladite fente de carte à puce dans ledit lecteur de carte à puce;

l'application dudit élément pris parmi une signature, une clé et un élément de détermination identifiant ladite première carte à puce à ladite seconde carte à puce en réponse à une première instruction transmise par la seconde carte à puce; et

la transmission de ladite date de désactivation à ladite seconde carte à puce en réponse à une seconde instruction générée par la seconde carte à puce.

25. Procédé de commande d'accès de télévision à péage comprenant: 45

la fourniture d'un décodeur incluant une mémoire de décodeur et un lecteur de carte à puce;

l'insertion d'une première carte à puce dans ledit lecteur de carte à puce;

le transfert, depuis ladite première carte à puce à ladite mémoire de décodeur, de données de chaînage correspondant à un élément pris parmi une signature, une clé et un élément de dé-

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termination pour activer une seconde carte à puce;

l'enlèvement de ladite première carte à puce dudit lecteur de carte à puce; 5

l'insertion de ladite seconde carte à puce dans ledit lecteur de carte à puce;

la transmission, depuis ladite mémoire de décodeur à ladite seconde carte à puce, desdites données de chaînage; et 10

la validation desdites données de chaînage afin d'activer ladite seconde carte à puce. 15

26. Procédé selon l'une quelconque des revendications 1, 2, 17 et 18, dans lequel lesdits critères prédéterminés incluent un nombre de fois où des programmes à supplément ont été achetés avant la désactivation de ladite seconde carte à puce. 20

27. Système selon la revendication 8, dans lequel le calcul de ladite nouvelle date de désactivation inclut l'addition d'un nombre constant d'heures à ladite nouvelle date de désactivation de manière à réaliser une désactivation à un instant sélectionné d'un jour. 25

28. Procédé selon la revendication 22, dans lequel ladite application inclut l'addition d'un nombre constant prédéterminé d'heures à ladite nouvelle date de désactivation. 30

29. Système selon l'une quelconque des revendications 8 ou 22, dans lequel l'incrément temporel est modifiable. 35

30. Procédé selon la revendication 22, comprenant le report de la désactivation de la seconde carte à puce d'une durée prédéterminée en activant une touche dans une télécommande. 40

31. Système selon la revendication 8, dans lequel ledit incrément temporel est spécifié selon au moins un élément pris parmi des heures, des jours et des mois. 45

32. Procédé de chaînage pour une utilisation avec une pluralité de cartes à puce, le procédé comprenant: 50

la fourniture d'une pluralité de décodeurs, chacun incluant un lecteur de carte à puce;

l'insertion d'une carte à puce dans chaque lecteur de carte à puce; 55

la désactivation d'au moins certains de la plu-

ralité de décodeurs en désactivant les cartes à puce associées conformément à des critères prédéterminés tout en maintenant une carte à puce associée à au moins un décodeur en activation;

l'enlèvement d'une carte à puce associée audit un décodeur en activation d'un lecteur de carte à puce associé audit un décodeur en activation;

l'enlèvement de cartes à puce associées auxdits certains de la pluralité de décodeurs de lecteurs de carte à puce correspondants associés auxdits certains de la pluralité de décodeurs;

l'insertion séparément de chacune desdites cartes à puce associées auxdits certains de la pluralité de décodeurs dans ledit lecteur de carte à puce associé audit un décodeur en activation; et

l'activation d'au moins l'une desdites cartes à puce associées auxdits certains de la pluralité de décodeurs suite à son insertion dans ledit lecteur de carte à puce associé audit un décodeur en activation.

33. Procédé de chaînage selon la revendication 32, dans lequel ladite étape d'insertion d'une carte à puce dans chaque lecteur de carte à puce comprend le transfert de données de chaînage correspondant à un élément pris parmi une signature, un élément de détermination et une clé depuis chaque carte à puce jusqu'à chaque lecteur de carte à puce correspondant et ladite étape d'activation comprend:

la transmission séparément de premières données de chaînage depuis ledit un décodeur en activation à chacune desdites cartes à puce associées auxdits certains de la pluralité de décodeurs; et

la validation séparément desdites premières données de chaînage afin d'activer chacune desdites cartes à puce associées auxdits certains de la pluralité de décodeurs.

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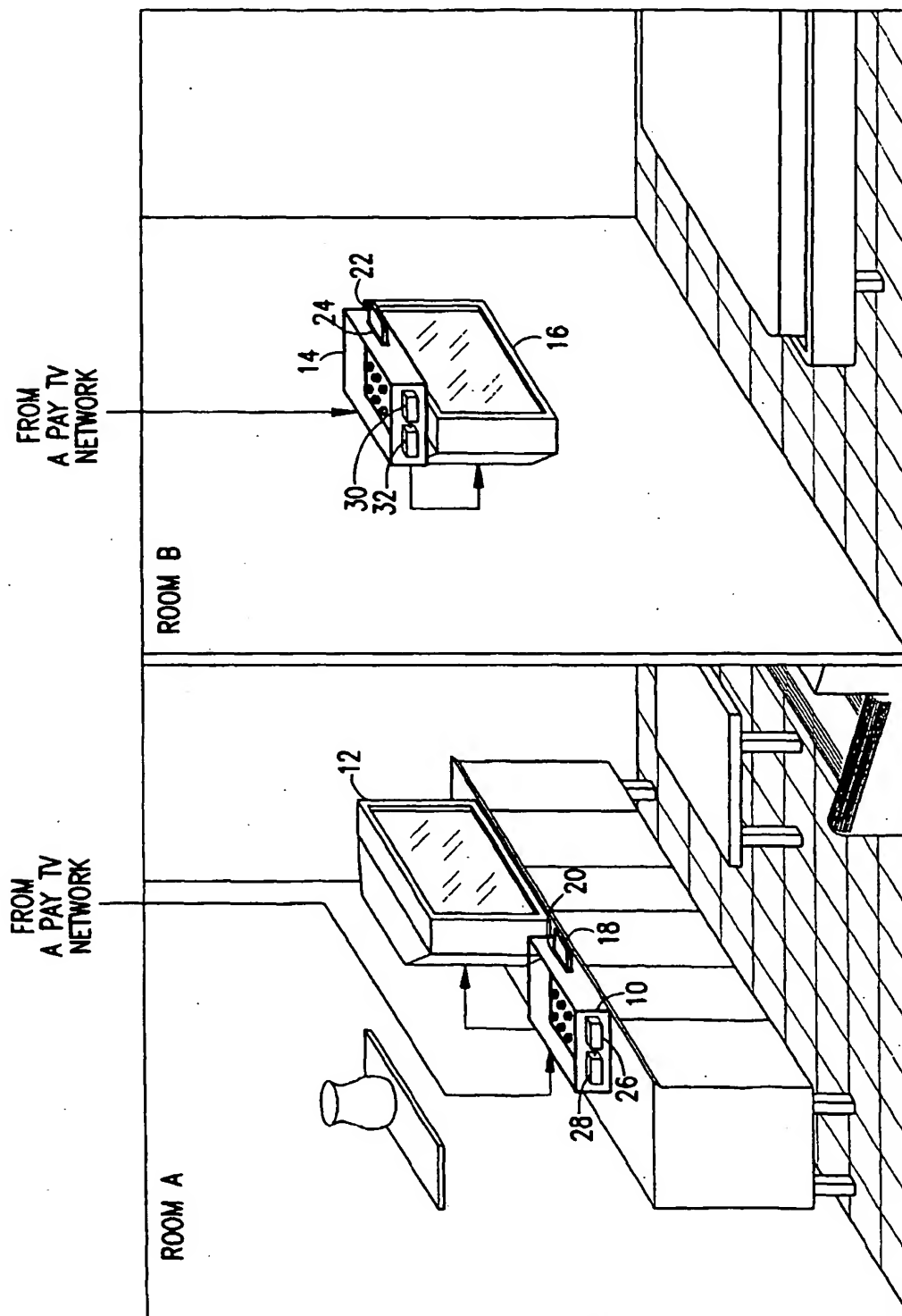


FIG. 1

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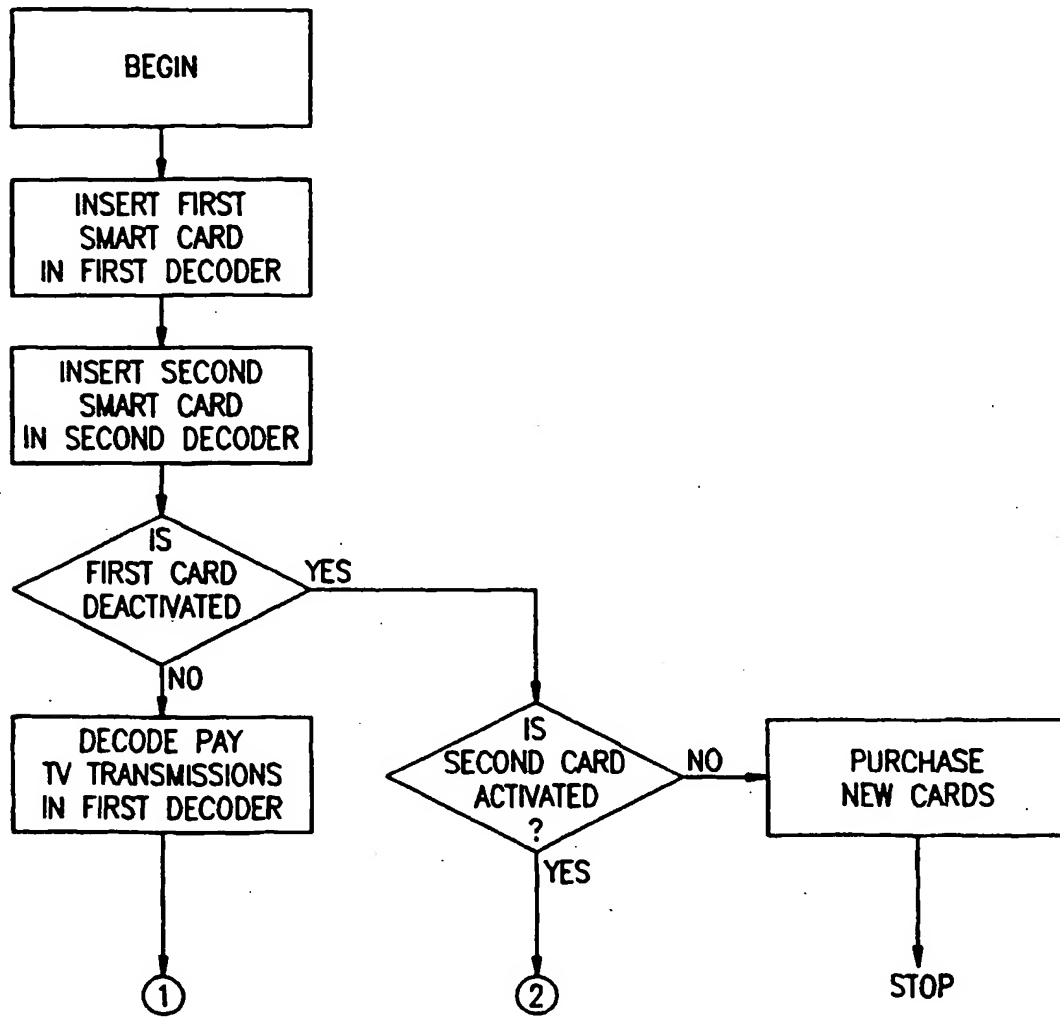
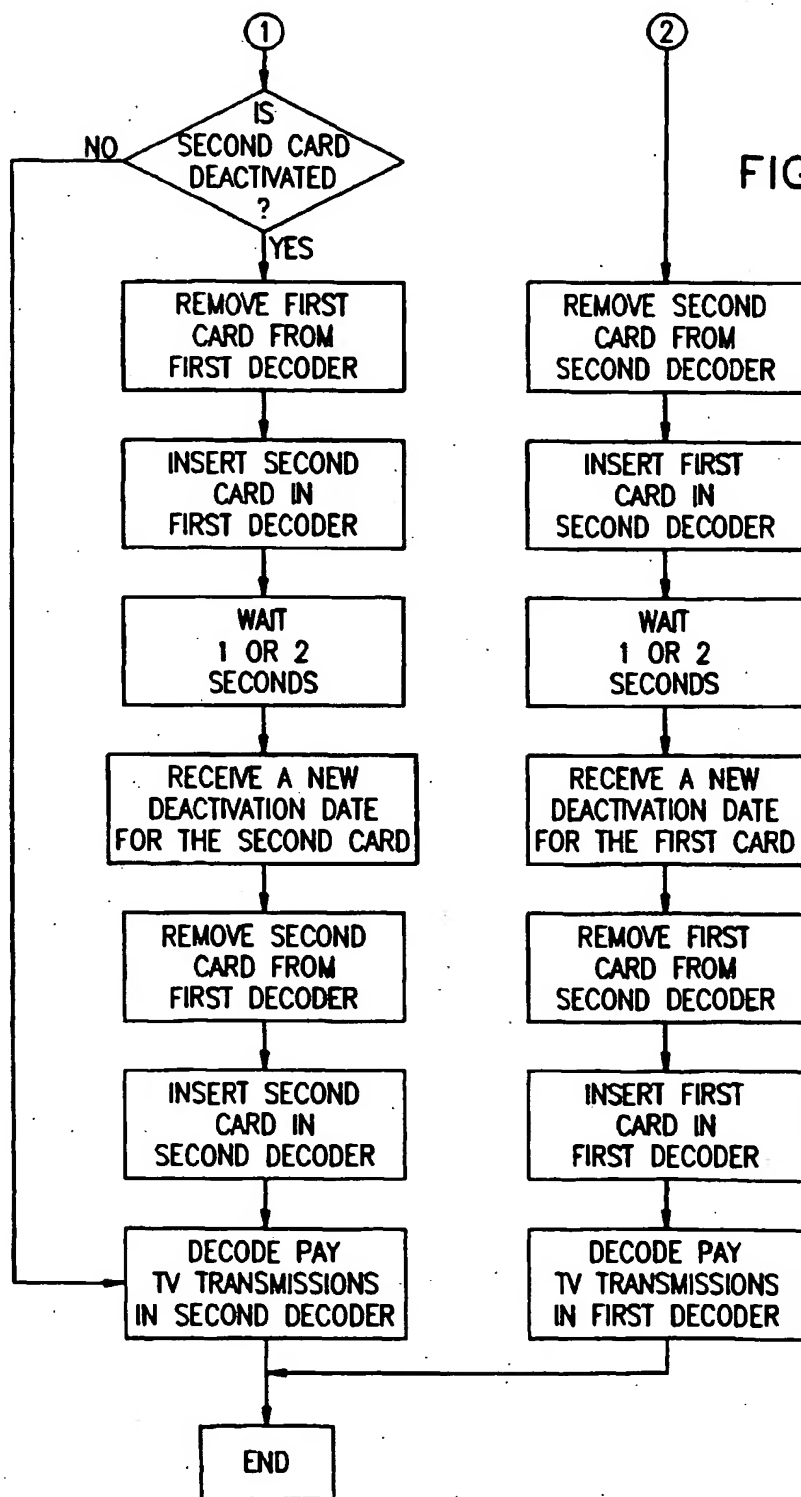


FIG. 2A

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FIG. 2B



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